United Nations A/70/PV.1

General Assembly
Seventieth session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 15 September 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the President of the General Assembly

The President: I declare open the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Statement by the President

The President: It is my great honour to open this, the seventieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, a session that I hope will be truly historic, a session not just of ground-breaking decisions, but one of much-needed concerted action for people and planet.

Let me begin by once again thanking the Member States for entrusting me to lead the world's most representative multilateral body. I also see their endorsement of me as an endorsement of the role that Denmark has played at the United Nations over the past 70 years. I will do my utmost to represent each country in a fair and open manner. As I do so, I will try to build upon the solid foundations laid by my predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa. I congratulate him in particular on shepherding the post-2015 negotiations to a successful conclusion, well in advance of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. I thank him and his Office for their close cooperation and support in recent months.

Let me also take this opportunity to recognize the crucial role played by the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in his tenure thus far, not least in supporting the emergence of a truly ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I very much look forward to working closely and in a collaborative manner with him over the coming year.

In less than 10 days' time, our leaders will gather in the General Assembly Hall to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a seminal — in fact, revolutionary, universal agreement befitting this anniversary year — and a welcome gift to a world beset by war and humanitarian crises, sectarianism and violent extremism, by poverty and inequalities, by climate change and environmental degradation.

In signing up to the 2030 Agenda, Governments will voluntarily commit to take action for the dignity, security, prosperity and human rights of our shared humanity; for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; for the sound management and fair distribution of the Earth's finite resources' and for the health and vitality of our planet. It raises hope of the

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United Nations being fit for purpose and committed to action.

The challenge now, and a major priority for my presidency, is to ensure that all actors move swiftly to deliver on the promises being made. The summit, of course, will mark only the beginning. There is an urgent need for action right across the three pillars of the United Nations, and ample opportunities to do so during this session.

Not long after the summit and general debate, our leaders will come together in Paris for the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. An ambitious and universal climate agreement is an absolute must, and must be the first real test of the world community's ability to deliver the necessary policy tools for sustainable development.

But there will be no sustainable development without peace and security and without respect for human rights. The United Nations and its States Members have a strong obligation to work together to end the catastrophic wars and conflicts — in and around Syria, in the greater Middle East, in Africa and even in Europe. And we have to act here and now to address the huge and explosive refugee crises resulting from ongoing conflicts, and to protect the human rights of all refugees.

With the conclusion of the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, the release of the global study on women and peace and security, the forthcoming plan of action to prevent violent extremism, the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism trategy, and the recently published report of the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/70/95), there is significant scope to demonstrate our commitment to action across the broad range of peace and security during this session.

Among other important issues, I will also preside over the high-level meeting in December on the World Summit on the Information Society. I will hold a special session of the General Assembly in the spring of 2016 on the world drug problem, as well as a high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS. And, in May, the Secretary-General will convene a world humanitarian summit — an incredibly timely and crucial initiative.

In addition, we must continue our efforts to revitalize the work of the Assembly. Responding to the continued interest among many Member States in both the reform of the Security Council and in creating more transparency and openness when selecting the next Secretary-General, I will continue the work mandated by Member States on both of those issues.

We must also ensure constructive negotiations relating to the United Nations budget, and I will consult widely in the coming months to ensure their timely conclusion.

Finally, during this session, several events will take place to commemorate the seventieth anniversary, including a high-level event on peace and security on 1 to 2 October; another to mark the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations, on 23 October; and an another to mark the seventieth anniversary of the first session of the General Assembly, on 11 January 2016.

With such a busy schedule ahead of us, I am keenly aware of the pressure that all Missions to the United Nations will face. The three high-level thematic debates that I will hold in my capacity as President, therefore, will aim to complement ongoing activities and to take stock of each of the three pillars of the United Nations. The United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and the general debate will be the starting points for these discussions, with their focus, respectively, on sustainable development and the road ahead for peace and security and for human rights.

The first high-level thematic debate will be dedicated to the implementation of commitments relating to sustainable development, climate change and financing. It will take place in April. In this way I will endeavour to mobilize and catalyse individual, collective, multilateral and multi-stakeholder action to support early progress on realizing our global goals.

The second high-level thematic debate will take place in May. It will focus on strengthening the role and performance of the United Nations in the area of peace and security. It will serve as a platform for an open and frank exchange of views and could span the full spectrum of threats to global security. One of the key deliverables from this debate will be to draw out synergies from the three major peace and security-related reviews now at various stages of advancement: the peace operations review, the review of peacebuilding, and the global study on women and peace and security.

The third high-level thematic debate will be organized next July and will revolve around human rights. Here, the focus will be on the role of the United Nations in the field of human rights, including in relation to governance, the rule of law, gender equality and institution-building. Taking into account the unprecedented scale of global humanitarian challenges, particular focus will be placed on addressing the needs of the hundreds of millions of men, women and children affected by conflicts and disasters.

It is my hope that these events can help us to identify pragmatic and action-oriented outcomes in each area. To that end, I will consider holding support meetings to explore particular issues or elements that warrant additional focus or preparation. I will conduct all activities in as transparent, inclusive and open a manner as possible. Where it is relevant, I will also engage with and involve civil-society representatives and others, such that a multi-stakeholder approach becomes a hallmark of my presidency.

I will also work closely with Committee Chairs and continue the tradition of coordinating, of course, with the Secretary-General as well as the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council to ensure the smooth and timely conduct of business.

With the cooperation of members, I am confident that we can make substantial and meaningful progress across this broad agenda.

It is, in some respects, hard to believe that this great Organization has already been in existence for 70 years. For, despite its significant evolution and achievements since 1945, the United Nations has much more to learn, much more to give and much, much more to do to fulfil its mandate under the Charter and to bring about the world envisaged by the 2030 Agenda.

Let us be clear: we are here, the Assembly of the world's nations, to help one another and the Organization to move towards that vision, through a spirit of global solidarity and with a renewed commitment to action.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: It is a great pleasure to be here today to open the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you once again on your election. Your wide-ranging experience as Foreign Minister, Finance Minister and Speaker of the Danish Parliament bodes well as you take on your new responsibilities.

Much important work lies ahead.

World leaders will gather at the highest level to adopt the landmark 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Member States are also moving towards a meaningful and universal agreement on climate change in December this year. The United Nations system is readying itself to support achieving the new Goals. Financing will be a crucial and early test of commitment, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides important guidance.

In the weeks ahead, the General Assembly will deepen its discussions on my new report on the future of United Nations peace operations and on the review of our peacebuilding architecture. These efforts, along with the 10-year review of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, can help us strengthen our responses at a critical time.

A number of major milestones are on the 2016 calendar.

The high-level debate of the General Assembly on the world drug problem is expected to take place in April. I encourage Member States to arrive at common solutions on how to address this threat to people and communities. The need for a shared global responsibility has never been greater. No country is immune, just as no nation can address this challenge alone.

The third United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat III), to be held in Quito in October, can showcase what works and help steer the world's cities and settlements onto a more sustainable path.

The World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul in May, comes at a time when nearly 60 million people have been displaced by conflict and violence — more than at any other time since the Second World War. Human suffering and economic losses from disasters caused by natural hazards are increasing. And yet, just over one third of humanitarian funding requirements for this year have been met. The leadership of all Member States is critical to make the changes that are needed to address pressing humanitarian challenges and build a safer world for all. I urge them to continue to give the summit process their full support.

(*spoke in French*)

This session marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The principles enshrined in the Charter have stood the test of time, and the United Nations can look back on a record of achievement. At the same time, we know that suffering remains widespread across the world. My thoughts today are especially with the people of Syria: those inside the country facing terrible violence, and those who have fled, desperately seeking a safe haven in order to begin a better life.

This seventieth session of the Assembly must be one of compassion, prevention and, above all, action.

We in the Secretariat and I personally look forward to providing our full support to you, Mr. President, and to all Member States in upholding our responsibilities to today's and succeeding generations.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Item 138 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/70/374)

The President: Next, I would like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/70/374. It contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that five Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in document A/70/374?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the seventieth session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the seventieth session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Argentina, Austria, Barbados, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, South Africa and the United States of America.

May I take it that the States that I have just mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Organization of work of the seventieth session of the General Assembly

Letter from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences (A/70/366)

The President: The Assembly will now turn its attention to document A/70/366, which contains a letter dated 8 September 2015 from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly. Members are aware that, pursuant to section 1, paragraph 7, of Assembly resolution 40/243, of 18 December 1985, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during the main part of a regular session of the Assembly, unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

On the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, authorization is thus sought for the following subsidiary organs: the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; the Disarmament Commission; the Committee on

Relations with the Host Country; the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize these subsidiary organs of the Assembly to meet during the main part of the seventieth session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.

United Nations A/70/PV.2

General Assembly
Seventieth session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Friday, 18 September 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

First report of the General Committee (A/70/250)

The President: May I invite the General Assembly to direct its attention to section I of the report of the Committee. In that section, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraph 2.

May I request the General Assembly to now direct its attention to section II, entitled "Organization of the session", which contains a number of recommendations concerning the General Committee, the rationalization of work, the opening and closing dates for the session, the schedule of meetings, the general debate and the conduct of the meetings, and so on.

In paragraph 26, the General Committee draws to the attention of the Assembly the fact that the general debate will begin on Monday, 28 September, and recommends that it continue to Saturday, 3 October 2015.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the information contained in paragraph 26 and approves the recommendation that the general debate continue on Saturday, 3 October 2015?

It was so decided.

The President: All other recommendations in section II of the report of the Committee concern established practice, so rather than going through them one by one, I believe it would be beneficial to address all of these organizational matters concerning the General Assembly as a whole. There being no comments on that approach, we shall proceed accordingly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information and to approve all the recommendations of the General Committee contained in section II of the report?

It was so decided.

The President: Having just adopted the recommendation in paragraph 21, on waiving the requirements of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to declare a meeting open, I should like to encourage delegations to be present in the meeting rooms at the scheduled time in order to promote the punctuality and efficiency of the Assembly's proceedings.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 51 concerning the timely submission of draft proposals for the review of their programme budget implications?

It was so decided.

The President: May I now invite members to turn their attention to section III, dealing with the adoption of the agenda. The question of the allocation of items will be dealt with subsequently in section IV.

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In section III, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 62 to 67. In paragraph 68, in connection with item 41 of the draft agenda, entitled "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B, entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security", on the understanding that there would be no consideration of this item by the General Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 69, in connection with item 64 of the draft agenda, entitled "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Sassas da India", the General Committee decided to recommend that consideration of this item be deferred to the seventy-first session of the General Assembly and that the item be included in the provisional agenda of that session. May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 70, in connection with sub-item (b) of item 70 of the draft agenda, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading D, entitled "Promotion of human rights". May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 71, in connection with sub-item (dd) of item 98 of the draft agenda, entitled "Joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading G, entitled "Disarmament". May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 72, in connection with item 169 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the Eurasian Economic Union in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 73, in connection with item 170 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the Community of Democracies in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 74, in connection with item 171 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the International Civil Defence Organization in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 75, in connection with item 172 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the Indian Ocean Rim Association in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 76, in connection with item 173 of the draft agenda, entitled "Global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin with specific emphasis on Syrian asylum seekers", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Sam Kutesa, for his hard work in ensuring the success of the sixty-ninth session.

On behalf of my country's delegation, I wish to present a brief statement at the request of the representative of Turkey, to include a proposed

addendum in the agenda of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, specifically, on the "Global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin with specific emphasis on Syrian asylum seekers".

In the Syrian Arab Republic, we are deeply concerned indeed and saddened to see Syrians leaving our country, fleeing terrorism and seeking peace and security. We hope that without delay every single Syrian will be able to return to his or her home, village, school, university or job. We therefore welcome any sincere, real effort to deal with this issue. Nevertheless, this proposed agenda item presented by Turkey causes us to doubt and question what the concealed objectives of this proposal might actually be.

This crisis is due, above all, to the terrorism striking at the people of Syria and all their institutions. This terrorism has been created by the foreign interference in the political, military and economic spheres of Syrian life of countries that everybody knows, including Turkey. This interference has created, fuelled and spread the phenomenon of terrorism throughout Syria, the region and beyond, making it a universal scourge affecting the entire planet. It is a situation that has caused many Syrian citizens to escape crime and terror by leaving the country. Every day, the media broadcasts evidence of crimes that affect everyone through the disruption of infrastructure and services, which has destroyed the possibility for people to work or lead their normal daily lives. Punishment and unilateral action taken against Syria aggravate this tragic scenario, which is pushing Syrians to leave their motherland and making them fall victim to crime and criminal groups.

Turkey's policies are a major factor in the development of this phenomenon in Syria. The Turkish Government is responsible for this tragedy, as the Erdoğan Government has made no effort whatsoever to counter the terrorists and mercenaries. Rather, it has allowed them to enter Syria through Turkish territory to kill and destroy. The Turkish Government has spared no effort in supporting these military and terrorist groups, particularly Daesh, while also interfering directly in my country in order to assist them. There are many witnesses to this fact in Ain Al-Arab, Kobani, Aleppo and Kesab in Latakia, among others.

Daesh did not emerge in a vacuum. There are those who fuel it, assist it, finance it and help it commit all sorts of crimes, turning the Syrian people into the victims of all kinds of human exploitation. The first Government to act in this way was the Turkish regime. Not only has it stolen Syria's heritage, it also blew up 1,441 factories and laboratories in Aleppo. Turkey is taking advantage of the Syrian crisis to force people to leave the country and go elsewhere to create a crisis. Turkey is pushing the United States of America and Europe to establish a region that will fuel and harbour terrorism in the north of Syria.

Turkey's request makes this unethical objective clear. It is using the World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul at the beginning of next year, to further its unethical agenda and it continues to put pressure on the Syrian regime by using it as a political weapon. My delegation asks the United Nations to put an end to the Erdoğan regime's exploitation of the Syrian crisis. We therefore call on the General Assembly to express its concern and be attentive with regard to the unethical, immoral objectives of that request.

In conclusion, the crisis of displaced Syrians is just one part of the larger Syrian crisis. The Governments responsible for fuelling this crisis have spared no effort in order to harm the Syrian people. From the very beginning, these Governments — including, unfortunately, some Arab Governments and other regional and international Governments — have tried to militarize the crisis, make it global in scale and use it as part of their agendas in the Security Council. Once this crisis was triggered, they resorted to using chemical weapons.

The President: I should like to remind members once again that we are currently considering organizational matters concerning the adoption of the provisional agenda and the allocation of items. At present, we are not discussing the substance of any item. Substantive aspects relating to an item included in the provisional agenda should be discussed during the scheduled plenary meeting debate on that item.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic): I will conclude, Mr. President.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

In a parallel fashion, these same Governments exploit the international community and the humanitarian situation in Syria as a political weapon in order to bring down the Syrian Government and open the doors to create disorder, which some see as a weapon to destroy my people's aspirations. These countries weep

for the displaced Syrian people, although they may be welcome in other host countries to further exploit the crisis.

(*spoke in English*)

I reserve my right to make another statement when we deal with the substantive part of the discussion.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): My delegation was not planning to deliver a statement today as the General Assembly adopts the provisional agenda for the seventieth session, which is set to become a historic one in the course of the next few weeks. Unfortunately, I have had to take the floor in response to one delegation's baseless allegations, which are yet another attempt to divert attention from the enormous destruction, human suffering and forced displacement of millions of Syrians. But I will not go into detail.

With our proposal, which is under consideration today, we place our faith in the United Nations and its membership to increase its global awareness of the tragedies of hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants and refugees on the move in the Mediterranean Basin. We hope this initiative will enable the international community to discuss viable responses and solutions, which can be found through collective efforts undertaken through partnerships and solidarity.

This is not Turkey's agenda item per se. We have proposed it, but it is in our collective interests to consider this issue for humankind. The world is watching the United Nations and waiting for a response from the organ convened in this Hall.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 76 of the report?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the agenda recommended by the General Committee in paragraph 77 of its report for adoption by the General Assembly, taking into account the decisions just adopted with respect to the draft agenda.

Bearing in mind that the agenda is organized under nine headings, we shall consider the inclusion of items under each heading as a whole. I should like to remind members once again that, at present, we are not discussing the substance of any item.

Items 1 and 2 have already been dealt with. We shall now turn to items 3 to 8. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the inclusion of the items listed under heading A, entitled "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences". May I take it that the items listed under heading A are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to heading B, entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security". May I take it that the items listed under heading B are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia): As this is the first time the delegation of Armenia takes the floor at this session, let me begin by extending words of congratulation to you, Mr. President, upon your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly and to assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the deliberations and work of the General Assembly.

I wish to state that Armenia dissociates itself from the consensus on including item 40 in the agenda of the seventieth session of the General Assembly. I kindly ask, through you, Mr. President, the Secretariat to duly reflect the Armenian position in the official records of this meeting.

The President: We take note of the statement by the representative of Armenia.

Next, we turn to heading C, entitled "Development of Africa". May I take it that the item listed under this heading is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we come to heading D, entitled "Promotion of human rights". May I take it that the items listed under heading D are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading E is entitled "Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts". May

I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to heading F, entitled "Promotion of justice and international law". May I take it that the items listed under heading F are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to heading G, entitled "Disarmament". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading H is entitled "Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we turn to heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the items listed under heading I are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section IV of the report of the General Committee, on the allocation of items.

The General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 78 to 80. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 80 concerning the granting of observer status?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 82 to 86. We shall take up the recommendations one by one. Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers cited here refer to the agenda in paragraph 77 of the report before us, namely document A/70/250.

We shall now turn to paragraphs 82 (a) to (m), which relate to a number of plenary items. We turn first to paragraph 82 (m), which relates to item 130, entitled "Global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin, with specific emphasis on Syrian asylum seekers".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 82 (m)?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all the information that the General Committee wishes it to take note of and approve all the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 82 (a) to (m)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 83 (a) and (b), which relate to item 97, entitled "General and complete disarmament", and sub-item (dd) of item 97, entitled "Joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability", for consideration by the First Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 83 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraph 84, which relates to sub-item (b) of item 69, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples", for consideration by the Third Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 84?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 85 (a) and (b), which relate to item 135, entitled "Programme planning", and item 143, entitled "Administration of justice at the United Nations", for consideration by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 85 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 86 (a) to (d), which relate to item 169, entitled "Observer status for the Eurasian Economic Union in the General Assembly"; item 170 , entitled "Observer status for the Community of Democracies in the General Assembly"; item 171, entitled "Observer status for the International

Civil Defence Organization in the General Assembly"; and item 172, entitled "Observer status for the Indian Ocean Rim Association in the General Assembly", for consideration by the Sixth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 86 (a) to (d)?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to paragraph 87 of the report of the General Committee, on the allocation of items to the plenary and to each Main Committee.

We turn first to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed for consideration directly in plenary meeting.

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the First Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the First Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Second Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Sixth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation. Each Main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure.

I would now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the Holy See in its capacity as an observer State in the session and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 58/314, of 1 July 2004, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/58/871, the Holy See, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

I would also like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolutions 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974; 43/177, of 15 December 1988; 52/250, of 7 July 1998; and 67/19, of 29 November 2012, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002, the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

In addition, I would like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 65/276, of 3 May 2011, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/65/856, observers of the European Union will participate in the work of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

United Nations A/70/PV.3

General Assembly
Seventieth session

Official Records

3rd plenary meeting
Friday, 25 September 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m.

Address by His Holiness Pope Francis

Pope Francis was escorted into the General Assembly Hall by the President and the Secretary-General.

The President: This morning we shall hear an address by His Holiness Pope Francis of the Observer State of the Holy See on the occasion of his visit to the United Nations.

It is my great honour to welcome Pope Francis — Bishop of Rome, Head of the Roman Catholic Church and defender of the dignity of humankind and the life-support systems of our planet — to the General Assembly.

When he has previously recalled how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and peace, he has spoken directly to the three pillars of the United Nations and the interdependency and interconnectedness of those three pillars. That is the message at the heart of the new and very ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which we confront the injustices of poverty, marginalization and discrimination. We recognize the need to reduce inequalities and protect our common home by changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. We identify the overwhelming need to address the politics of division, corruption and irresponsibility that fuel conflict and hold back development.

As His Holiness has stated, we are indeed united by the same concern. In two months' time, at the climate conference in Paris, that unity will be tested. We can and we must find the wisdom and courage to adopt an ambitious climate agreement to protect people and planet. Similar urgency and unity are required to bring an end to the conflicts and violent extremism affecting many parts of the world today.

To date, our collective response to the crisis and to the plight of millions of displaced people and refugees has been at best inadequate and at worst a failure of our humanity. The need for this great Hall to address these crises with leadership and action in the spirit of solidarity, dialogue and tolerance cannot be overstated. Therefore, we are greatly looking forward to hearing His Holiness' address to the General Assembly. I welcome him once again.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome His Holiness to the United Nations. It is an honour for us to be his hosts for this historic visit.

(*spoke in English*)

For those of us who cherish the United Nations, this Hall is sacred space. In no other hall — from no other platform — can a world leader speak to all humankind. And for decades, that is precisely what world leaders — kings and queens, presidents, prime ministers, ministers and popes — have done. But never in our 70-year history has the United Nations been honoured to welcome a Pope for the opening of the General Assembly, and never in papal history has the

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Head of the Catholic Church addressed such an array of world leaders.

I thank His Holiness for making history. I thank him for demonstrating yet again his remarkable global stature as a man of faith for all faiths. His motto is *miserando atque eligendo*, or "lowly but chosen". And he strives every day to include the excluded. He is at home not in palaces but among the poor; not with the famous but with the forgotten; not in official portraits, but in selfies with young people.

Like the United Nations, he is driven by a passion to help others. His views move millions. His teachings bring action. His example inspires us all. His visit today coincides with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. But that is no coincidence. He has often spoken of an integral ecology that encompasses the environment, economic growth, social justice and human well-being; in other words, sustainable development for our common home.

The recent papal encyclical — *Laudato si'* — defines climate change as a principal challenge facing humankind and a moral issue. This message is critical as we approach the pivotal climate change conference in Paris in December.

Across the global agenda, His Holiness is a resounding voice of conscience. He has cried out for compassion for the world's refugees and migrants and for solidarity with people trapped in conflict and poverty. He is committed to lifting up struggling families and shutting down modern-day slavery. He believes in building roads of opportunity for young people and bridges between communities.

In May 2014, Pope Francis met with the full leadership of the United Nations system at the Vatican. He affirmed that we must mobilize the world beyond religious or political differences to forge a shared vision — a life of dignity for all. On the first page of his recent encyclical, Pope Francis said, "I wish to address every person living on this planet".

I welcome His Holiness to the pulpit of the world. We are here to listen.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I once again wholeheartedly welcome His Holiness Pope Francis to this Hall and now invite him to address the Assembly.

Pope Francis (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, following a tradition by which I feel honoured, the Secretary-General has invited the Pope to address this assembly of nations. In my own name and that of the entire Catholic community, I wish to express to Mr. Ban Ki-moon my most sincere and heartfelt gratitude and thank him for his kind words. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Heads of State and Government here today, to the ambassadors and diplomats and the political and technical officials accompanying them, as well as to the staff of the United Nations working for the General Assembly at its seventieth session, those involved in all the Organization's programmes and agencies, and all those who in one way or another are participating in this meeting. And through them I would also like to greet the citizens of every nation represented in this Hall. I am grateful for the efforts of each and every one to benefit humankind.

This is the fifth time that a Pope has visited the United Nations. I follow my predecessors Pope Paul VI, in 1965, Pope John Paul II, in 1979 and 1995, and, most recently, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, in 2008. They all expressed their profound esteem for the Organization, which they considered to be the appropriate juridical and political response to this moment in history, which has been marked by our technical ability to overcome distances and frontiers and, it seems, any natural limit to the exercise of power. It is an essential response, inasmuch as technological power in the hands of nationalistic or falsely universalist ideologies is capable of perpetrating terrible atrocities. I can only reiterate the appreciation expressed by my predecessors by reaffirming the importance that the Catholic Church attaches to this institution and the hopes that its activities inspire.

The story of the organized community of States represented by the United Nations, which is now celebrating its seventieth anniversary, is one of significant shared successes in a time of unusually rapid change. To mention just a few, they include the codification and development of international law, the establishment of international standards of human rights, improvements in humanitarian law, the settling of many conflicts, peacekeeping operations and reconciliations, and any number of other achievements in every area of international activity and endeavour. All of these are lights that can banish the darkness of the disorder that results from unrestrained ambitions and collective selfishness. We can be sure that while many serious problems are still unresolved, it is clear that without all those international actions, humankind could not have survived the unchecked exploitation

of its own potential. Each of those political, juridical and technical advances is a path towards attaining the ideal of human brotherhood and a way of achieving its greater realization.

That is why I would like to pay homage to all the men and women who have served humankind with loyalty and self-sacrifice in the past 70 years. I would especially like to recall today those who have given their lives for peace and reconciliation among peoples, from Dag Hammarskjöld to the many United Nations officials at every level who have fallen in the course of humanitarian missions and those of peace and reconciliation.

But far beyond those achievements, the experience of the past 70 years has shown that reform and adaptation to the times are always essential as we work towards the ultimate goal of ensuring that all countries without exception can participate in our decisions and have a genuine and equitable influence on them. The need for greater equity is especially true in the case of bodies that have an executive capability, such as the Security Council, the financial institutions and those groups and mechanisms specifically created to deal with economic crisis. It can help to limit any kind of abuse or usury, especially where developing countries are concerned. The international financial institutions should work to help countries achieve sustainable development and ensure that they are not subjected to oppressive lending systems that, far from promoting progress, subject people to mechanisms that result in greater poverty, exclusion and dependence.

The work of the United Nations, according to the principles set forth in the Preamble and first Articles of its founding Charter, can be seen as the development and promotion of the rule of law in the understanding that justice is an essential condition for achieving the ideal of universal brotherhood. In that context, we should recall that the limitation of power is an idea implicit in the very concept of law. Giving to each his own, to cite the classic definition of justice, means that no individual or group can consider themselves omnipotent, permitted to trample on the dignity and rights of other individuals or social groups. The practical distribution of power, whether political, economic, defence-related or technological, among a plurality of citizens, and the creation of a juridical system for regulating claims and interests, is one concrete way of limiting power.

Yet today's world presents us with many false rights and, at the same time, broad sectors which are vulnerable, victims of the misuse of power: the natural environment and the vast ranks of men and women who are excluded. These sectors are closely interconnected and made increasingly fragile by the dominant political and economic relationships. That is why their rights must be forcefully affirmed by working to protect the environment and by putting an end to exclusion.

First, it must be stated that a true "right of the environment" does exist, for two reasons. The first is that we human beings are part of the environment. We live in communion with it, since the environment itself entails ethical limits that human activity must acknowledge and respect. Man, for all his remarkable gifts, which are signs of a uniqueness that transcends the spheres of physics and biology, is at the same time a part of these spheres. He possesses a body shaped by physical, chemical and biological elements, and can survive and develop only if the ecological environment is favourable. Any harm done to the environment, therefore, is harm done to humankind.

Secondly, all of creation — particularly living beings — has intrinsic value in its existence, its life, its beauty and the interdependence among creatures. We Christians, together with the other monotheistic religions, believe that the universe is the fruit of a loving decision by the Creator, who permits man respectfully to use creation for the good of his fellow men and for the glory of the Creator; he is not authorized to abuse it, much less destroy it. In all religions, the environment is a fundamental good.

The misuse and destruction of the environment are also accompanied by a relentless process of exclusion. In effect, a selfish and boundless thirst for power and material prosperity leads both to the misuse of available natural resources and to the exclusion of the weak and the disadvantaged, either because they are differently abled — handicapped — or because they lack adequate information and technical expertise, or lack the capacity for decisive political action. Economic and social exclusion represents a complete denial of human fraternity and a very grave offence against human rights and the environment. The poorest are those who suffer most from such offences, for three serious reasons: they are cast off by society, forced to live off what is discarded, and suffer unjustly from the consequences of the abuse of the environment. These phenomena are part of today's widespread and quietly growing culture of waste.

The dramatic reality of this whole situation of exclusion and inequality, with its evident effects, has led me, in union with the entire Christian people and many others, to take stock also of my grave responsibility in this regard and to speak out, together with all those who are seeking urgently needed and effective solutions. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the world summit that opens today is an important sign of hope. I am similarly confident that the Paris Conference on Climatic Change will secure fundamental and effective agreements.

Solemn commitments, however, are not enough, even though they are a necessary step towards solutions. The classic definition of justice that I mentioned earlier contains as one of its essential elements a constant and perpetual will: *Iustitia est constans et perpetua voluntas ius sum cuique tribuendi* — "Justice is the constant and perpetual desire to give to each that to which he is entitled".

Our world demands of all Government leaders a will that is effective, practical and constant, with concrete steps and immediate measures for preserving and improving the natural environment and thus putting an end as quickly as possible to the phenomenon of social and economic exclusion, with its baneful consequences of human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labour, including prostitution, the drug and weapons trade, terrorism and international organized crime. The magnitude of these situations and their toll in innocent lives is such that we must avoid every temptation to fall into a declarationist nominalism which would only assuage our own consciences.

We need to ensure that our institutions are truly effective in the struggle against all these scourges. The number and complexity of the problems require that we possess technical instruments of verification. But this involves two risks. We can rest content with the bureaucratic exercise of drawing up long lists of good proposals — goals, objectives and statistical indicators — or we can think that a single theoretical and aprioristic solution will provide an answer to all the challenges. It must never be forgotten that political and economic activity is only effective when it is understood as a prudential activity, guided by a perennial concept of justice and constantly conscious of the fact that, above and beyond our plans and programmes, we are dealing with real men and women, just like the Government leaders, who live, struggle and suffer, and are often forced to live in great poverty, deprived of all rights.

To enable these real men and women to escape from extreme poverty, we must allow them to be dignified agents of their own destiny. Integral human development and the full exercise of human dignity cannot be imposed. They must be built up and allowed to unfold for each individual, for every family, in communion with others, and in a right relationship with all those areas in which human social life develops — friends, communities, towns and cities, schools, businesses and unions, provinces and nations. This presupposes and requires the right to education — also for girls, who are excluded in certain places — which is ensured first and foremost by respecting and reinforcing the primary right of the family to educate its children, as well as the right of churches and social groups to support and assist families in the education of their boys and girls. Education conceived in this way is the basis for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and for reclaiming the environment.

At the same time, Government leaders must do everything possible to ensure that all can have the minimum spiritual and material means needed to live in dignity and to create and support a family, which is the primary cell of any social development. In practical terms, this absolute minimum has three names — lodging, labour and land — and one spiritual name: spiritual freedom, which includes religious freedom, the right to education and all other civil rights.

For all this, the simplest and best measure and indicator of the implementation of the new agenda for development will be effective, practical and immediate access, on the part of all, to essential material and spiritual goods: housing, dignified and properly remunerated employment, adequate food and drinking water, religious freedom and, more generally, spiritual freedom and education. These pillars of integral human development have a common foundation, which is the right to life and, more generally, what we could call the right to existence of human nature itself.

The ecological crisis and the large-scale destruction of biodiversity can threaten the very existence of the human species. The baneful consequences of an irresponsible mismanagement of the global economy, guided only by the ambition for wealth and power, must serve as a summons to a forthright reflection on man. Man is not only a freedom which he creates for himself.

Man does not create himself. He is spirit and will, but also nature. Creation is compromised where we ourselves have the final word. The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any instance above ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves. Consequently, the defence of the environment and the fight against exclusion demand that we recognize a moral law written into human nature itself, which includes the natural difference between man and woman and an absolute respect for life in all its stages and dimensions.

Without the recognition of certain incontestable natural ethical limits and without the immediate implementation of those pillars of integral human development, the ideal of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom risks becoming an unattainable illusion or, even worse, idle chatter that serves as a cover for all kinds of abuse and corruption or for carrying out an ideological colonization by the imposition of anomalous models and lifestyles which are alien to people's identity and, in the end, irresponsible.

War is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment. If we want true integral human development for all, we must work tirelessly to avoid war between nations and between peoples. To this end, there is a need to ensure the uncontested rule of law and tireless recourse to negotiation, good offices and arbitration, as proposed by the Charter of the United Nations, which constitutes truly a fundamental juridical norm. The experience of the 70 years of existence of the United Nations generally, and that of the first 15 years of the third millennium in particular, demonstrates how effective international standards can be when they are fully applied and how ineffective when they are not. When the Charter of the United Nations is respected and implemented with transparency and sincerity and without ulterior motives, as an obligatory point of reference for justice and not as a tool for concealing false intentions, peace can result. On the other hand, when a standard is seen simply as an instrument to be used when it produces the right results and to be avoided when it does not, we open a real Pandora's box of uncontrollable forces that do serious harm to defenceless populations and to our cultural and biological environments.

The Preamble and Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations lay the foundations for an international juridical framework of peace, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the development of friendly relations among nations. A vivid contrast to such affirmations and one that in practice negates them is the ever-present tendency to allow arms to proliferate, especially weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weapons. A system of ethics and laws based on the threat of mutual destruction, and possibly the destruction of all humankind, is a contradiction in terms and an affront to the entire edifice of the United Nations, which would become a group of nations united by fear and distrust. We must work hard for a world free of nuclear weapons by implementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in letter and in spirit, until such instruments are totally banned. The recent agreement reached on the nuclear issue in a sensitive region of Asia and the Middle East is proof of the potential of political goodwill and the law, when exercised with sincerity, patience and persistence. I hope that the agreement will be lasting and effective and produce the desired results, with the cooperation of all parties involved.

In that regard, we do not lack for hard evidence of the negative consequences of military and political interventions undertaken without coordination among the members of the international community. And while I wish I did not have to, I must therefore renew my repeated appeals concerning the painful situation in the entire Middle East, North Africa and other African countries where Christians, along with other cultural and ethnic groups, and including those adherents of the majority religion who have no desire to be caught up in the hatred and madness, have been forced to witness the destruction of their places of worship, their cultural and religious heritage and their homes and property, and are faced with the alternatives either of fleeing or of paying with their lives or with enslavement for their devotion to goodness and peace.

Such realities should serve as an urgent call to those charged with the conduct of international affairs to examine their consciences. Real human beings take precedence over partisan interests, however legitimate those may be — and not just in cases of religious and cultural persecution, but in every situation of conflict, such as those in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, South Sudan and the Great Lakes region. Those individual human beings caught up in wars and conflicts are our brothers and sisters, men and women, young and old, boys and girls who weep, suffer and die — human beings who are thrown on the rubbish heap when all we do is make

lists of problems, strategies and arguments. As I said in my letter of 9 August 2014 to the Secretary-General, the most basic understanding of human dignity obliges the international community, particularly through the norms and mechanisms of international law, to do all it can to end and prevent further systematic violence against ethnic and religious minorities and to protect innocent peoples.

Along the same lines, I would like to mention another kind of conflict that is not always so explicit and yet is silently killing millions of people. Many of our societies experience a different kind of war as a result of the drug trade, one that we take for granted and that is feebly combated. By its very nature, drug trafficking is accompanied by trafficking in persons, money laundering, the arms trade, child exploitation and other forms of corruption. That corruption has penetrated into every level of life — social, political, military, artistic and religious — and in many cases has given rise to a parallel structure that threatens the credibility of our institutions.

I began this speech recalling the visits of my predecessors. I would hope that my words will be taken above all as a continuation of the final words of the address of Pope Paul VI; although spoken almost exactly 50 years ago, they remain ever timely:

> "Now the hour for a halt is upon us, a moment of meditation, of reflection, almost of prayer; a moment to think anew of our common origin, our history, our common destiny. Never before has there been such a need for an appeal to the moral conscience of man as there is today ... For the peril comes neither from progress nor from science; on the contrary, properly used, they could resolve many of the grave problems which beset mankind." (*A/PV.1347, para. 45*).

Among other things, human genius, well applied, will surely help to meet the grave challenges of ecological deterioration and of exclusion. As Paul VI said:

> "The real peril is in man, who has at hand ever more powerful instruments, suited as much to destruction as to the highest conquests." (*ibid.*)

The common home of all men and women must continue to rise on the foundations of a right understanding of universal fraternity and respect for the sacredness of every human life, of every man and every woman, the poor, the elderly, children, the infirm, the unborn, the unemployed, the abandoned, those considered disposable because they are considered only as statistics. This common home of all men and women must also be built on the understanding of a certain sacredness of created nature.

Such understanding and respect call for a higher degree of wisdom, one which accepts transcendence, rejects the creation of an all-powerful elite and recognizes that the full meaning of individual and collective life is found in selfless service to others and in the wise and respectful use of creation for the common good. As Paul VI said,

> "the edifice of modern civilization must be built on spiritual principles, which alone can not only support it, but also illuminate and animate it (*ibid., para. 46*).

El Gaucho Martin Fierro, a literary classic in my native land, says:

> "Brothers should stand by each other, because this is the first law; keep a true bond between you always, at every time, because if you fight among yourselves, you will be devoured by those outside."

The contemporary world, which appears to be so connected, is experiencing a growing and steady social fragmentation that places at risk the foundations of social life and consequently leads to battles over conflicting interests.

The present time invites us to give priority to actions that generate new processes in society, so as to bear fruit in the form of significant and positive historical events. We cannot permit ourselves to postpone certain agendas for the future. The future demands of us critical and global decisions in the face of worldwide conflicts that increase the number of the excluded and those in need.

The praiseworthy international juridical framework of the United Nations and of all its activities, like any other human endeavour, can be improved, yet it remains necessary; at the same time, it can be the pledge of a secure and happy future for future generations. And so it will, if the representatives of States can set aside partisan and ideological interests and sincerely strive to serve the common good. I pray to Almighty God that this will be the case, and I assure the Assembly of my support and my prayers, and the support and prayers of all the faithful of the Catholic Church, that this institution, all of its Member States and each of

its officials will always render an effective service to mankind, a service respectful of diversity and capable of bringing out, for the sake of the common good, the best in all people and in every individual.

May God bless you all.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to express, as we have already done by clapping, our deep appreciation to His Holiness Pope Francis for his very important statement, a statement that is a source of reflection and inspiration for all of us.

His Holiness Pope Francis was escorted from the General Assembly Hall by the President and the Secretary-General.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.